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STATE PASS USTR FOR IVES/WEISEL

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TAGS: [KPAO](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [MARR](#) [ECON](#) [KS](#) [US](#)
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Top Headlines

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ROK Loses More Than 100,000 Jobs in January
Seoul Shinmun
CNN: N. Korea Spotted Assembling Electronic Equipment Used to Monitor Missile Launches

Domestic Developments

- [¶1. The ROK and the U.S. will introduce a new war plan in case of a North Korean invasion, when they hold their annual joint military exercise in August. \(JoongAng, Dong-a, Hankook, Segye, Seoul, KBS, MBC\)](#)

International News

¶1. According to CNN, a U.S. spy satellite captured an image within the last several days that showed North Korea has been assembling electronic equipment used to monitor missile launches. (All)

¶2. In a related development, an ROKG source was quoted as saying yesterday: "North Korea seems to be proceeding with its preparations to test-fire a Taepodong-2 missile by continuously moving additional equipment needed for a missile launch to the Musudan-ri launch site it used to test-fire the missile in 2006. (Hankook, Seoul)

¶3. Defense Secretary Robert Gates said in a Feb. 10 press conference at the Pentagon that Washington is ready to shoot down North Korea's Taepodong missile if the communist state actually fires it toward U.S. territory. (All)

¶4. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, meanwhile, stated during a separate press conference at the State Department: "North Korea has to understand that all of the countries in East Asia have made it clear that its behavior is viewed as unacceptable. There are opportunities for North Korea and its people if the North resumes the Six-Party Talks." (All)

¶5. Chosun Ilbo headlined its story: "U.S. Secretaries of State and Defense Issue Strong Warnings, with North Korea's Missile Moves Becoming More Acute than Expected."

Media Analysis

North Korea

The ROK media gave prominent play to Feb. 10 press remarks by U.S. Secretaries of Defense and State regarding North Korea's alleged moves to test-fire a long-range Taepodong-2 missile. Defense Secretary Robert Gates was widely quoted as saying in a press conference at the Pentagon that Washington is ready to shoot down North Korea's Taepodong missile if the communist state actually fires it toward U.S. territory. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton was also widely quoted as stating during a separate press conference at the State Department: "North Korea has to understand that all of the countries in East Asia have made it clear that its behavior is viewed as unacceptable. There are opportunities for North Korea and its people if the North resumes the Six-Party Talks."

Conservative Chosun Ilbo commented in an inside-page report that the two top Washington officials have issued strong warnings to North Korea not to test-fire a Taepodong missile, with the North's missile moves becoming more acute than expected. Chosun also noted Secretary Clinton's remark, "There are opportunities for the North Korean regime and its people if the North resumes the Six-Party Talks," and commented that the U.S. administration has also made clear its intention to persuade North Korea by engaging with the North in the near future. Right-of-center JoongAng Ilbo editorialized: "The remarks by the two top American officials are the Obama Administration's first warning messages to Pyongyang. They're also a plea for patience from all parties related to North Korean issues and confirmation that the subject is very much on the administration's radar. As Secretary Clinton said, the U.S. recognizes the significance of the Six-Party Talks. The Talks have been progressing with an aim to solve the North's security and economic situation altogether, and the framework's accomplishments thus far must not be ignored. In particular, the Obama Administration has expressed an intention to actively engage with the North; Pyongyang has a whole new opportunity to restart its diplomacy. Testing a missile, however, would shatter any new hopes." A commentary in moderate Hankook Ilbo observed: "If North Korea hastily uses its missile card against the Obama Administration, which stresses direct talks and diplomatic negotiations with the North, the U.S. may have no choice but to doubt the North's willingness to negotiate and resolve issues. A missile launch by North Korea would aggravate its relations with not only the ROK but also the U.S., making it impossible for the North to have "comprehensive negotiations" with the U.S., negotiations the North has craved.

The ROK media also gave wide attention to a CNN report yesterday saying that a U.S. spy satellite captured an image within the last several days that showed North Korea has been assembling electronic

equipment used to monitor missile launches and that the same events took place during North Korea's last Taepodong missile launch in October 2006. In a related development, an ROKG source was quoted by moderate Hankook Ilbo and Seoul Shinmun as saying yesterday: "North Korea seems to be proceeding with its preparations to test-fire a Taepodong-2 missile by continuously moving additional equipment needed for a missile launch to the Musudan-ri launch site it used to test-fire the missile in 2006.

An anonymous senior Pentagon official was also cited as saying on Feb. 10 that U.S. Pacific Command decided to move battleships to locations capable of monitoring North Korea's activities and that the USG is monitoring the latest movements using all military assets.

Citing the (North) Korean Central News Agency, most of the ROK media reported that North Korean leader Kim Jong-il has reshuffled senior military leaders. Vice Marshall Kim Yong-chun (73), Vice Chairman of the Defense Commission, was reported as being appointed as Minister of People's Armed Forces or Defense Minister and Gen. Ri Yong-ho, Commander of the Pyongyang Defense Command, as the new Chief of the North Korean Army's General Staff. In particular, conservative Chosun Ilbo quoted an ROK intelligence officer as saying, "It is unusual for North Korea to reshuffle key military leaders in a situation where it is increasing the threat of armed conflict by showing signs of preparing for a long-range missile test. We are carefully analyzing why North Korea has replaced the key officials." Chosun also quoted experts as commenting: "Both leaders used to serve in the field army and are good at actual combat operations. It seems that North Korea wants to create a wartime atmosphere to consolidate its control over the people and put pressure on the ROK."

Israel Elections

The ROK media carried inside-page reports saying that Foreign Minister and ruling Kadima Party leader Tzipi Livni and hard-line rival Benjamin Netanyahu, leader of the hawkish Likud Party, both claimed victory in Israel's Feb. 10 parliamentary elections.

Accordingly, the ROK media said that a third candidate, ultra-nationalist Avigdor Lieberman, would likely single-handedly determine the country's next leader with his decision of whom to join. Most of the ROK media expected Israel's foreign policy to become tougher, including on the Gaza issue, as right-wing parties have made strong showing in the elections.

Afghanistan

The ROK media reported that Taliban fighters, carrying assault rifles and wearing suicide vests, simultaneously attacked three government buildings in Kabul yesterday, killing 26 people. Most of the ROK media noted that the coordinated attacks came on the eve of a planned visit by President Barack Obama's Special Envoy to the region, Richard Holbrooke. In particular, conservative Dong-a Ilbo headlined its story: "Taliban Attacks, Timed to Coincide with Holbrooke's Visit, Presage a Bumpy Road Ahead for Obama's Afghan Policy."

Opinions/Editorials

North Korea Has Nothing to Gain with a Missile Launch
(Hankook Ilbo, February 12, 2009, Page 39)

By Kyungnam University Prof. Kim Geun-sik

The Korean Peninsula is in a precarious situation. North Korea is fiddling with the missile card against the U.S., while putting pressure on the ROK.

A missile launch would not be advantageous to the North at all. By resorting to bluffs multiple times, North Korea has grabbed the attention of the Obama Administration recently appointed to office and has proclaimed the gravity of the Korean Peninsula issue. The North should not conduct a potentially lethal missile launch when it should already be content with such tangible gains it has made in the games. Otherwise, this would eliminate a chance for the U.S. and North Korea talks and jeopardize the Six-Party Talks which have barely survived. If North Korea hastily plays the missile card against the Obama Administration which stresses direct talks and diplomatic negotiations with the North, the U.S. may become dubious about the North's willingness to negotiate and resolve issues. The negotiators dealing in North's affairs with good intentions would be

forced to cave in to hawkish demands. A missile launch by North Korea would strain its relations with not only the ROK but also the U.S., thus making it impossible for the North to have "comprehensive negotiations" with the U.S., which the North has craved.

Keeping in mind that the second year of the February 13 Agreement is approaching, North Korea and U.S. should draw a lesson from the success of reaching a consensus at that time. The February 13 Agreement led to a breakthrough in the long-stalled Six-Party Talks, and paved the way for tangible improvements in nuclear issues. The North and U.S. were involved in a confrontation due to the nuclear test by North Korea and subsequently the UN's sanctions against the North. However, based on the February 13 Agreement, they embarked on full-fledged negotiations in order to settle contentious issues. In the Berlin Talks between North Korea and the U.S., they frankly discussed most of the key issues and reached a mutual compromise.

The U.S. and North Korea should show their willingness to negotiate.

The Obama Administration and North Korea should actively display their steadfast willingness to negotiate. They should hurry to initiate bilateral talks based on trust. Secretary of State Clinton should add more weight to the North-U.S. bilateral talks than the Six-Party Talks. North Korea should show its firm willingness to negotiate rather than resort to reckless brinkmanship.

ROK's Preemptive Afghanistan Aid Diplomacy
(JoongAng Ilbo, February 12, 2009, Page 26)

By editorial writer Bae Myung-bok

U.S Secretary of State Hillary Clinton is scheduled to visit East Asian countries from next week and Richard Holbrook, an envoy to Afghanistan, is touring the region in his charge. Holbrook is to report new Afghanistan policies to President Obama within 60 days after a reviewing process. The outline is that the U.S. will deploy more troops in Afghanistan instead of curtailing the stationed forces in Iraq. The U.S. government will increase the presence of 33,000-strong U.S forces to 60,000, while requesting the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) allies to participate. Presently, a total of 70,000 soldiers from 41 countries are stationed in Afghanistan. The U.S. government plans to ask NATO members to send more combat troops but will request other allies to provide auxiliary assistance such as intelligence, monitoring, surveillance, transportation, medical aid and training.

The ROK pulled 210-strong forces from the Dasan Engineering Unit and the Dongui Medical Unit out of Afghanistan since late 2007 when a hostage incident broke out. The hostage taking in Afghanistan still lingers in our mind and thus re-deployment of troops would not garner public consensus. We have to seek other alternatives.

Against this backdrop, remarkably, the ROK and Japanese foreign ministers yesterday agreed on a detailed Afghanistan joint aid program. The two countries decided to establish a job training center by utilizing Official Development Assistance (ODA). They also agreed to jointly develop bean species to suit local conditions in Afghanistan. Also, it is known that the ROK government is to expand the number of the Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) personnel to up to 100. To its credit, the ROK pledged to form a united front in Afghanistan aid diplomacy with Japan which the Obama Administration considers as its key ally in East Asia. In addition, the ROK made a wise decision to increase the scale of aid only at the private level.

The ROK and Japan made a wise decision to take joint countermeasures.

Two Korean soldiers lost their lives in Afghanistan; one was killed in the incident and the other was sacrificed in a suicidal attack. Two of the 23 church volunteers taken as hostages also were regrettably killed. Afghanistan is different from Iraq's Kurdistan where Zaytun troops were stationed. Realistic and palpable danger exists in Afghanistan. Therefore, the ROK government should block the Obama government's call for aid beyond the non-combat civilian level. We cannot emphasize too much the significance of joint countermeasures orchestrated between the ROK and Japan.

Noticing the North
(JoongAng Ilbo, February 12, 2009, Page 26)

U.S. Secretary of Defense Robert Gates indicated yesterday that should North Korea fire a missile in the direction of American territory, the U.S. is ready to shoot it down if deemed necessary. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, who will visit East Asia next week, told reporters in Washington earlier that countries in the region are seriously concerned about the latest development in North Korea.

These recent remarks by American senior government officials are the Obama Administration's first warning messages to Pyongyang. They're also a plea for patience from all parties related to North Korean issues, and confirmation that the subject is very much on the administration's radar.

North Korea has been raising so many red flags lately in order to grab the attention of the U.S. Pyongyang fears that Washington will otherwise sidestep North Korean issues due to preoccupation with problems such as its battered economy and conflicts in the Middle East. Through its pointed statements, the administration is acknowledging the threat of the North's missiles.

If North Korea were to indeed launch a missile, security in Northeast Asia would grow tremendously turbulent. The Six-Party Talks will lose momentum, and the international community will intensify its criticism of the North. Pyongyang could even expect to be slapped with more punitive measures. The already-troubled country will be left even more isolated politically and economically, which will further deepen its deprivation.

North Korea's tattered economy and increasing political instability is the outcome of its reclusive attitude that has ignored the fast-changing global economy. Its decades-long brinkmanship is clearly an ill-advised strategy. Then there's the fact that it has spent massively to develop various weapons, which are aimed only at spooking neighbors to get what it wants. North Korea would be in a far better situation had it used the money spent to develop nuclear weapons and missiles on its economy instead.

As Secretary Clinton said, the U.S. recognizes the significance of the Six-Party Talks on denuclearizing the North. The Talks have been progressing with an aim to solve the North's security and economic situation altogether, and the framework's accomplishments thus far must not be ignored. In particular, the Obama Administration has expressed an intention to actively engage with the North; Pyongyang has a whole new opportunity to restart its diplomacy. But testing a missile would shatter any new hopes.

* This is a translation provided by the newspaper, and it is identical to the Korean version.

■N. Korea Should Heed U.S. Warnings
(Chosun Ilbo, February 12, 2009, Page 27)

U.S. Secretary of Defense Robert Gates on Tuesday said shooting down a Taepodong 2 missile launched by North Korea remains an option for his government. Gates added it would be advisable for North Korea to focus on sending a positive message about progress in denuclearization and verification. Gates said the U.S. decided to deploy battleships to locations where they can track North Korean activities, while a spokesman for U.S. Pacific Command said all military resources were being mobilized to closely monitor the situation.

Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, who will visit Seoul on Feb. 19, said, "North Korea has to understand that all of the countries in East Asia have made it clear that its behavior is viewed as unacceptable." Clinton added that if North Korea resumes Six-Party Talks or two-way U.S.-North Korean dialogue, it will see new opportunities, and that she hoped this would happen within the next few weeks or months.

It is rare for the U.S. state and defense secretaries to issue advance warnings to North Korea on the same day. This is how far North Korea's display of hatred toward South Korea has gone beyond

the limit. The two U.S. officials urged North Korea to turn to dialogue, saying that provocative acts would only bring harm. We are seeing some critical signs. For instance, Chinese fishing vessels have departed from waters along the Northern Limit Line in the West Sea.

U.S. diplomatic and security officials are saying that provocative action by North Korea will be interpreted by Washington as a challenge to the Obama Administration and would lead to sanctions, while dialogue will open the way for new opportunities. North Korea should take Washington's clear message literally.

* This is a translation provided by the newspaper, and it is identical to the Korean version.

Features

Some Koreans Have Their Children Adopted by U.S. Base Personnel to Enroll Them in U.S. Schools
(Hankook Ilbo, February 12, 2009, Front Page)

By Reporter Lee Dae-hyuk

Koreans account for 30 percent of the total students at a high school in Yongsan Garrison.

Even if you do not know who the adoptive parents are, you can send your children to them for adoption at a cost of 200 million won.

Korean students crowd out eligible children of U.S. families.

Every morning, Student A, aged 17, heads to Hannam-dong, Yongsan-gu, Seoul, where his adoptive parents are living, because he has to take a school bus there. Student A was adopted by American parents working at Yongsan Garrison two years ago, but he is actually living with his birth parents. His birth parents "falsely" had their son adopted by an American family in order to send him to a U.S. school at the military base.

It was confirmed that some Korean parents go to the lengths of sending their children to U.S. families for adoption so that they can attend a U.S. school at a U.S. military base in the ROK. In this process, there are illegal money transactions between birth and adoptive parents.

At present, there are a total of eight schools at U.S. bases across Seoul, Daegu, Gyeonggi Province, and the schools, which are under the jurisdiction of the Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA), have American curriculums for kindergarteners, middle and high school students. Children of U.S. military personnel have priority for enrollment in the schools, and children of U.S. citizens are also accepted.

However, the proportion of Korean students in the schools is gradually increasing. Quite a number of them are those who obtained U.S. citizenship through illegal adoption. In case of Seoul American High School (SAHS) at Yongsan Garrison, as of last September, Asian students accounted for 195 (30 percent) of the total 656 students, followed by 192 Caucasians (29 percent) and 155 students of other races (24 percent). Most Asian students are Korean. SAHS Assistant Principal Bernard Hippelwith said, "Among the Asian students, who else is there besides Koreans?" adding, "Although I know that most of them enroll in the school through adoption, there is no problem with that."

Children are sometimes adopted by their relatives, but, in many cases, they are adopted by U.S. military personnel with no blood ties. An adoption broker in Itaewon said on February 11, "Around 200 million won (150,000 U.S. dollars) is charged for adoption between non-relatives. While it is difficult to find an American willing to adopt a child, Korean parents who wish to send their children for adoption are waiting in line. They desperately want to send their kids to the U.S. school at Yongsan Garrison." He added, "Three years after being adopted, the children can get their U.S. citizenships. I have once arranged the adoption of ten children in a month."

An American, who said he was involved in this scam for dozens of years while working at Yongsan Garrison, noted, "There are also many

cases in which U.S. military personnel willing to adopt a child approach a broker. A broker delivers an adoption fee of about 150,000 dollars from birth parents to adoptive parents and completes the adoption and enrollment procedures." Three years later, when an adopted child should go to U.S. territories, such as Hawaii and Guam, to obtain U.S. citizenship, he will be accompanied by his adoptive parents with the travel expenses paid by his birth parents.

The Yongsan Garrison employee said, "In all this process, birth and adoptive parents do not need to meet each other."

Besides money transaction, another problem is that there is no way to ban this kind of adoption. Adoption through a private agency only requires birth and adoptive parents to agree to the adoption and to report it to the district office. Overseas adoption through a private agency requires approval by birth parents and permission from the USG. The ROKG has no room to intervene. Furthermore, it is virtually impossible to crack down on money traded under the table. A USFK official said, "Several years ago, we were tipped off about this case and started an investigation, but since we failed to find any evidence, the case was wrapped up."

A growing number of Korean students at U.S. schools are now crowding out eligible children of U.S. military personnel. A woman who has a seven-year-old daughter with her U.S. soldier husband complained, "Since there are too many Korean students, there is no spot for my child."

Stephens
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